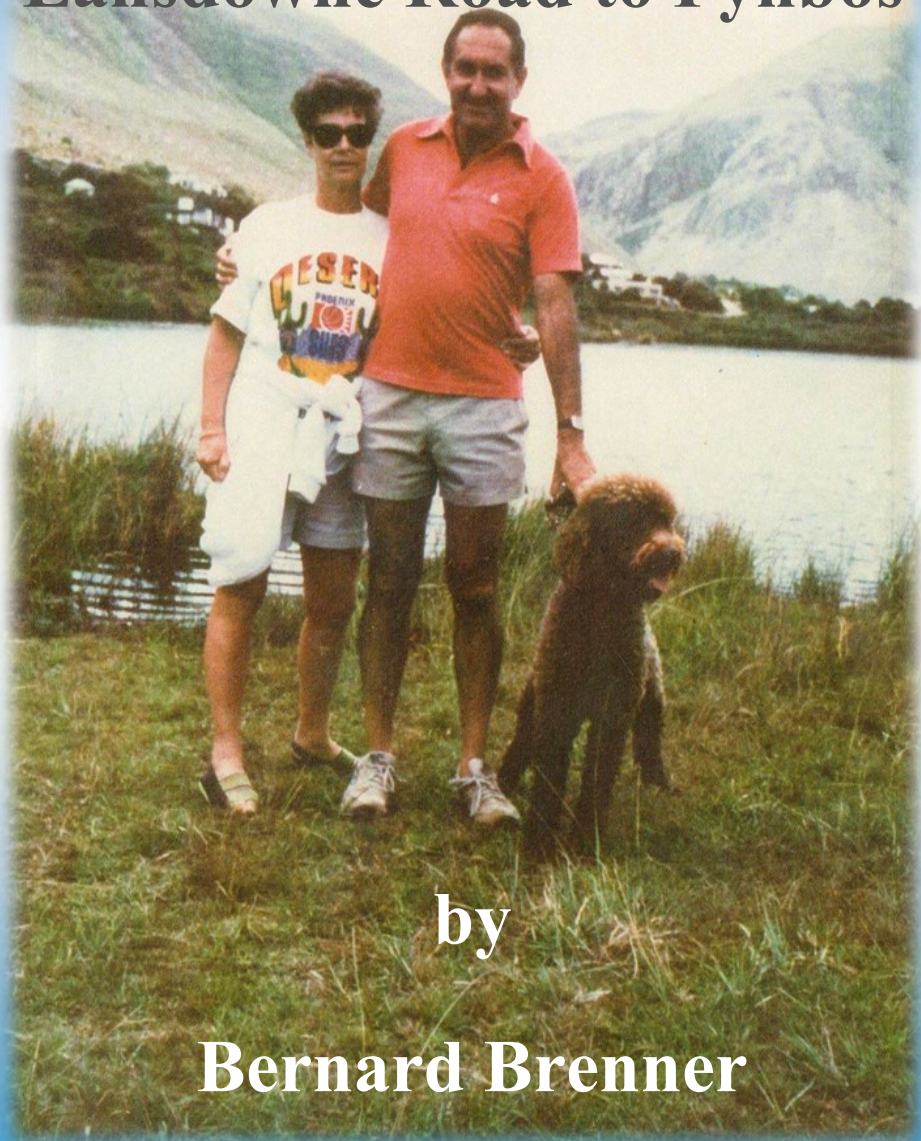


My journey from Lansdowne Road to Fynbos



by

Bernard Brenner

My journey from Lansdowne Road to Fynbos



Written by Bernard Brenner

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Edited by Naeema Nordien

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To My Family

Clifford, Lance and Jonathan, Rochelle, Diane and my Grandchildren Bradley, Lauren, Aiden and Joseph.

I have written this biography so that you will read and remember our background and to know where you come from and perhaps pass on this story to your own families one day.

I was happy to know my Zayda and was happy to listen and absorb his stories that he enjoyed telling me.

Unfortunately I was naïve and immature not to have questioned him about his parents and even his grandparents and to know more about our family from Der Heim .

Rose used to hear many stories about her family from Lithuania and today regrets not listening more attentively

It is said that youth is the most incredible time in your life but as the saying goes “Its wasted on the youth”.

Rose has been steadfast in her support for my business and sporting career for which I thank her so much.♦

My Beautiful Family



From left: Rochelle, Bradley, Clifford, Rose,
Bernard, Lance, Jonathan, Joseph, Diane, Aiden
and Lara

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CHAPTER 1
MY GRANDFATHER



Baruch Brenner

In 1904 my grandfather, Baruch Brenner, arrived in Cape Town. He left Lithuania because of pogroms & anti-Semitism. My grandfather (*Zayda) was a highly skilled boot maker and made leather boots for the Russian soldiers in Lithuania.

Baruch Brenner and his wife Rochelle had five children, two daughters and three sons. Leah, Rebecca, Jack, Sam and my father Louis (the youngest).

My Zayda started a business on Lansdowne Road when it was still a sand road. He rented the property and named it Brenner's Store. This store would provide goods from a needle to an anchor. The rental was three pounds a month. I still have the receipt book. One of my prized possessions

Zayda was one of the original members of the Claremont Shul (**Synagogue). In Claremont at that time was a thriving Jewish community and many of them were shopkeepers. Some of the families were Marcus, Goott, Tobias, Plax, Lomofsky, Tuch, Reingold, Dorfman, Beekman and many more, including the Brenner family, of course. There is a smaller Shul attached to the main Shul built in the memory of Aunt Rebecca Berk who sent her staff to clean the main Shul every Friday before the onset of the Shabbat and who was a deeply religious woman. My aunt Rebecca married Benjamin Berk who owned the Lansdowne Hotel. My sister Rona and I spent much time at the hotel and were very friendly with our cousins.

CALENDAR FOR 1902.

JANUARY		FEBRUARY		MARCH		APRIL	
Sunday	5 12 10 30	S	2 9 10 23	S	2 9 10 23	S	6 10 20 25
Monday	6 13 11 31	M	3 10 17 24	M	3 10 17 24	M	7 11 21 28
Tuesday	7 14 12 31	T	4 11 18 25	T	4 11 18 25	T	1 8 16 22 30
Wednesday	8 15 13 31	W	5 12 19 26	W	5 12 19 26	W	2 9 16 23 31
Thursday	9 16 14 31	T	6 13 20 27	T	6 13 20 27	T	3 10 17 24
Friday	10 17 15 31	F	7 14 21 28	F	7 14 21 28	F	4 11 18 25
Saturday	11 18 25	S	18 15 22	S	18 15 22	S	5 12 19 26

MAY		JUNE		JULY		AUGUST	
Sunday	4 11 18 25	S	1 8 15 22 29	S	6 13 20 27	S	3 10 17 24 31
Monday	5 12 19 26	M	2 9 16 23 30	M	7 14 21 28	M	4 11 18 25
Tuesday	6 13 20 27	T	3 10 17 24	T	1 8 15 22 29	T	5 12 19 26
Wednesday	7 14 21 28	W	4 11 18 25	W	2 9 16 23 30	W	6 13 20 27
Thursday	8 15 22 29	T	5 12 19 26	T	3 10 17 24	T	7 14 21 28
Friday	9 16 23 30	F	6 13 20 27	F	4 11 18 25	F	1 8 15 22 29
Saturday	10 17 24 31	S	7 14 21 28	S	5 12 19 26	S	2 9 16 23 30

SEPTEMBER		OCTOBER		NOVEMBER		DECEMBER	
Sunday	7 14 21 28	S	5 12 19 26	S	2 9 16 23 30	S	7 14 21 28
Monday	8 15 22 29	M	6 13 20 27	M	3 10 17 24	M	1 8 15 22 29
Tuesday	9 16 23 30	T	7 14 21 28	T	4 11 18 25	T	2 9 16 23 30
Wednesday	10 17 24	W	1 8 15 22 29	W	5 12 19 26	W	3 10 17 24 31
Thursday	11 18 25	T	2 9 16 23 30	T	6 13 20 27	T	4 11 18 25
Friday	12 19 26	F	3 10 17 24 31	F	7 14 21 28	F	5 12 19 26
Saturday	13 20 27	S	4 11 18 25	S	1 8 15 22 29	S	6 13 20 27

CALENDAR FOR 1903.

JANUARY		FEBRUARY		MARCH		APRIL	
Sunday	4 11 18 25	S	1 8 15 22 29	S	1 8 15 22 29	S	5 12 19 26
Monday	5 12 19 26	M	2 9 16 23 30	M	2 9 16 23 30	M	6 13 20 27
Tuesday	6 13 20 27	T	3 10 17 24	T	3 10 17 24	T	7 14 21 28
Wednesday	7 14 21 28	W	4 11 18 25	W	4 11 18 25	W	1 8 15 22 29
Thursday	8 15 22 29	T	5 12 19 26	T	5 12 19 26	T	2 9 16 23 30
Friday	9 16 23 30	F	6 13 20 27	F	6 13 20 27	F	3 10 17 24 31
Saturday	10 17 24 31	S	7 14 21 28	S	7 14 21 28	S	4 11 18 25

MAY		JUNE		JULY		AUGUST	
Sunday	3 10 17 24 31	S	1 8 15 22 29	S	6 13 20 27	S	3 10 17 24 31
Monday	4 11 18 25	M	1 8 15 22 29	M	7 14 21 28	M	4 11 18 25
Tuesday	5 12 19 26	T	2 9 16 23 30	T	1 8 15 22 29	T	5 12 19 26
Wednesday	6 13 20 27	W	3 10 17 24	W	2 9 16 23 30	W	6 13 20 27
Thursday	7 14 21 28	T	4 11 18 25	T	3 10 17 24	T	7 14 21 28
Friday	8 15 22 29	F	5 12 19 26	F	4 11 18 25	F	1 8 15 22 29
Saturday	9 16 23 30	S	6 13 20 27	S	5 12 19 26	S	2 9 16 23 30

SEPTEMBER		OCTOBER		NOVEMBER		DECEMBER	
Sunday	6 13 20 27	S	4 11 18 25	S	1 8 15 22 29	S	6 13 20 27
Monday	7 14 21 28	M	5 12 19 26	M	2 9 16 23 30	M	7 14 21 28
Tuesday	8 15 22 29	T	6 13 20 27	T	3 10 17 24	T	1 8 15 22 29
Wednesday	9 16 23 30	W	7 14 21 28	W	4 11 18 25	W	2 9 16 23 30
Thursday	10 17 24	T	1 8 15 22 29	T	5 12 19 26	T	3 10 17 24 31
Friday	11 18 25	F	2 9 16 23 30	F	6 13 20 27	F	4 11 18 25
Saturday	12 19 26	S	3 10 17 24 31	S	7 14 21 28	S	5 12 19 26

Received the
sum of Four pds
being Rent
of Brenner's
Apasmsky N.
stable 5
for July 109 4.00

10/17/09 R.B. Ball

Received the
sum of Three
pounds & 07/10
being Rent of
shop and for 500
stable do 50
£3.50

11/09 R.B. Ball

On the left is an original 1902 to 1903 calendar owned by Baruch Brenner.

On the right is a page of the receipt book for the rent paid for Brenner Stores.

As a young boy I spent much time in the shop after school and if Zayda was around he always had a story for me. I remember my Zayda fondly, with his pickled cucumbers, with lots of garlic but delicious to eat and so crunchy. I remember that Zayda used to love eating Haarders fried in butter and was not concerned with all the little bones.

One of the many stories he told me was about Brookside. A very large tract of land which was to be auctioned and Zayda had saved £3 000 (three thousand pounds) to bid for this ground. However, an African lady walked into the shop carrying a sack of potatoes. Zayda said to her "Please let me help you" and put the sack on the ground. When she had completed her purchases he said "Let me help you put the potatoes on your back" and when bending down he sprained a muscle in his back and was confined to bed thus ending his wish to buy Brookside.

Another story he loved telling me concerned a representative who said "Mr Brenner I think you are a very honest man and I will give you as much credit as you like". Each time I would ask "But Zayda what's so significant about that?" Zayda replied that this man's name was Mr J.W. Jagger who went on to have the largest wholesale business in South Africa.♦



Baruch Brenner, his wife Rochelle and five children.

From clockwise: Jack, Leah, Rebecca, Louis and Sam.

CHAPTER 2
MY MOTHER
&
FATHER



My father Louis Brenner was the youngest of Zayda's children. He took over the ownership of the shop in the 1920's. When he went on holiday to Durban one year, He met Claire Marsden (my mother) who after a short romance he married in 1928 and they settled behind the shop in Lansdowne Road.

My mother's family lived in Johannesburg and during their courting days my dad used to motor to Johannesburg. It was no easy task with an old Austin and no National road. Back then they had to travel through farms where gates had to be opened and closed. This would delay the journey and the trip took a few days.

My parents had 2 children. My sister Rona and me. Rona is 5 years older than what I am and used to bully me a bit.

When I was born in 1938 my father built us a house in Tasman Road in Claremont.

My mother Claire, who doted on my sister and I, established a very warm and happy home. She also made Rona and me very conscience of the fact that our father was a very hard working man.

Our family were big fish eaters and the fish cart was a regular visitor blowing his fish horn in Tasman Road where my mother bought fresh fish often.

One day my mother received a letter that gladdened her so much. Her brother in law Issy Distiller was being released from a POW (Prisoner Of War) camp in Italy and was coming to Cape Town for a couple of days before returning to Johannesburg to his family.

One day I answered a knock on the front door. “Can I help you” I said. “Yes, I would like you to call your father”. “Who should I tell him is at the front door” I asked. He reacted by saying “Charlie Chaplin”. Thinking back now, what an embarrassing moment for me but, what does a 7 years old know? My parents enjoyed Issy Distillers’ visit so much. On his first day in Cape Town he ventured to Kalk Bay and returned home with a Crayfish. When my mother came home from the shop that day she opened the fridge to find a Crayfish there.

She gave a scream of horror and told the maid to throw it in the dirt box. We kept a Kosher home and Crayfish is forbidden. Issy was not to happy.

Unfortunately in 1959 I experienced the saddest chapter of my life. My mother with whom I had the greatest love and respect had developed a brain tumour which resulted in her death at the young age of 48 years old. Our family was devastated and I did not think I would ever really overcome such grief.♦



Claire, Louis, Rona and Bernard enjoying a day at the beach in 1942.

CHAPTER 3

THE SHOP



Brenner Stores

Establish 1904

Besides the clothing and drapery shop we were also the local newsagent and imported comics and magazines that used to arrive by Union Castle line from England every Thursday. There was much excitement when the comics and Woman's weekly were unpacked.

In the avenues, before the forced removals there lived a thriving coloured community. The atmosphere in the avenues (Harfield Village) was very lively and around New Year there was much joy and excitement for the forthcoming Minstrel procession. There was much enthusiasm and all used to line Lansdowne Road for this unforgettable occasion when their bright clothing and guitars and tambourines provided such delightful entertainment.

In December when the builders used to get a bonus and payment for the forthcoming holiday some of the tradesman approached my father and said "Mr Brenner if I don't put some money away I will probably spend it all and be broke in January, so would you please keep my envelope and keep it in your safe till January?". Such was the respect and trust my father enjoyed with this community.

My father had a wonderful relationship with a number of the local corner grocers (*Babbie's) and it amazed me to see such mutual respect they had for each other. And who could forget my dad's dealing with Mr Mehl and Mr Margolit who used the shop (Brenner's Stores) as their wholesaler to purchase goods for resale.

My mother Claire used to count hundreds of Tickys (Three Cents) into rolls of 10 Shillings (One Rand) for deposit in the bank. She used to roll the coins in paper.

Every afternoon at about 3:30pm we had a crowd of paper seller's outside the shop waiting for their allocation of newspapers for delivery to Kenilworth, Claremont and Newlands. Each one received about 50 Cape Argus. The paper seller's had shrill voices and one could hear them shouting "Argie" and "The City Late". Needless to say every night the phone used to ring. "Where is my paper Mr Brenner?"

We employed 3 delivery guys on a permanent basis Charlie, Popeye and Lennie. They had delivery bicycles with carriers. Popeye even took Clifford (my son) to nursery school occasionally on his bicycle. My father Louis who spent 50 years working in the shop employed interesting staff. Mrs Petersen, who on the occasion of my Barmitzvah wished me a happy Bris Melah (circumcision). Mrs Goslett worked in the shop for 30 years and before working in the shop sold milk from a horse and cart. Mrs Cooper who also worked at the shop for many years and used to visit the clothing factories with my father who had lucrative connections there.

With the news agency my dad Louis & Popeye used to go to Newlands rugby ground on the occasion of a rugby test match to set up and sell popular magazines like Outspan, Personality and Farmers weekly. ♦



Bernard and Baruch Brenner

CHAPTER 4

MY SCHOOL YEARS



I was born in September 1938. I spent the first 18 years of my life in the Tasman Road house. We had very interesting neighbours and amongst my favourites were the Roberts family. Jackie Roberts was my age and I used to play often at his home. Jackie was very good with his hands and made a bicycle with a lawn mower engine on the rear end. We used to travel down Queen Victoria Road on his “motor bike”. His father Mr Roberts was the principal of Livingstone High school, his mother was a teacher there, his sister qualified as a doctor and his brother an engineer. Jackie qualified as a mechanical engineer. This fine family saw no future in South Africa and emigrated to England.

My other close friends while growing up were Wilfred Teper and Joey Berk, my cousin . Wilfred now lives in Canada and Joey after starting the Drop-In liquor group passed away at a youthful age.

After attending Claremont Public School I moved on to Wynberg Boys High school. While I was at high school I realized that I was the fastest runner in my age group and won many awards at inter-school’s athletic meetings. During my years at Wynberg School it was announced that an overseas tour was to take place during the summer holidays. Countries to be visited were the U.K, Belgium, Holland, France and Switzerland. My mother was keen for me to do this tour and we sailed from Cape Town on the *Arundel Castle in December 1954 and returned on the **Carnarvon Castle in January 1955. We thoroughly enjoyed this trip and it was a great learning experience.

*Arundel Castle was a British ocean liner which entered service for the Union-Castle Line in 1921

**Carnarvon Castle was a Union-Castle line ship ,

Ivan Atlas, a good friend of mine, was also on this tour and we are still close friends up to today. Unfortunately I concentrated more on sport and less on schoolwork and left school in JC (Junior Certificate or Standard 8) and went to a *Cram college where I completed my school career.

After school I applied for a job as a trainee manager at OK bazaars at that time the leading chain store in South Africa. I received wonderful experience there but the work was hard and long hours prevented me from continuing my athletic career.



From left: Raphy Berk, Joey Berk, Bernard Brenner and Wilfred Teper behind the Lansdowne Hotel in 1946

A humorous story of what happened one day when a sailor came to the OK to buy toys at wholesale prices and resell them in Lisbon. The manager Mr Folb said "Bernard go with this sailor to the ship in the harbour and collect from him 5000 pounds". I was a bit concerned as it was late in the day. He told me to sit down in the dining room as he had to wait on tables which should not take too long. While waiting in the dining room I heard noises from crane activity and told the waiter I could not wait any longer and he rushed to his cabin collected the money and by the time I got to the deck the crane was busy with the gangplank. Thankfully I got off just in time or I would have been en route to Lisbon.

I resigned from OK in 1959 as the company saw fit to import English managers who worked for Marks & Spencer. I was disappointed they overlooked the local trainee managers. To the dismay of OK the new imported managers left OK to take up new positions with Clicks and Pick n Pay.

Towards the end of the 1950's there was much political unrest in South Africa and in 1959 I was called up for duty and spent two months in the army when the Sharpeville tragedy occurred. Over 70 protesters were shot. At the end of my stint in the army I phoned my father to bring a selection of jeans, casual shoes and t-shirts to Youngsfield military camp. Along came 4 large suitcases packed with clothes. The young soldiers bought everything I had as they needed new civvies on their journey home. That was my first taste of retailing.♦

CHAPTER 5

MY YEARS AT BRENNERS STORE



In 1960 after I resigned from OK bazaars, I joined my father at Brenner's Store. My father and I had a great partnership & I learnt what hard work was all about.

I soon realized that I had a talent for buying good quality merchandise at very good prices. This resulted in many more people shopping at Brenner's. We renovated the property twice over the next few years. Business was so good that we occupied two more shops. One on the left and one to the right. On the right I opened Brenner's Baby boutique and on the left I opened Brenner's Blanket and linen centre.

In addition to our main shop, we stocked ladies wear, gents wear, boys wear, girls wear and school wear. We also had a large shoe department and sold dress materials and curtaining. Our business flourished but unfortunately my father passed away in 1976 at the age of 68 years old, a devastating blow to us all.

After taking ownership of the shop I realized that there was a gap in the market place for mature clothing and bought appropriately for gents and ladies. I started to advertise at senior citizens homes and had a good response. I also decided to visit the retirement homes twice a year, for the winter and summer season. After making an appointment Jeanette, one of my esteemed sales ladies, and I would load up our station wagon with goods and rails and displayed these items. Our business thrived and the clients loved our merchandise as well as our very good quality and reasonable prices.

I employed an alteration lady, Janet, who altered what was necessary and I delivered the goods the following day.

I had very interesting customers and also many humorous moments. A customer, residing at *Huis Nuweland, bought a wool tweed skirt which was too long and asked me to have it shortened. I took out my box of pins and lay on the floor under her skirt (a not too elegant position) and proceeded to hem her skirt. At that moment My cell phone alerted me to an incoming call. It was Shirley, one of my hiking friends.

She said “Bernard I need to speak to you”. My reply was “Shirley if you knew where I am at the moment you would not believe me, I will get back to you in 2 hours”. 😊

I had a star customer at *The Helen Keller home for the partially sighted, Mrs Haupt. She loved our clothing and she trusted me to always write her cheques. Then there was Mrs Grobbelaar at **Huis Piet Du Toit, an Afrikaans lady that knew a lot about succulent desert plants. In the passage outside her flat she had an amazing small garden with desert succulents and orchids. Such beautiful plants in such a small area. She was so excited one day and took me outside to show me where a bird had laid an egg. She made sure to protect the bird and her egg until the chick hatched and flew away. I will always remember these fine ladies.

In the year 2004 I realized that we were 100 years old, a good innings for any business and decided to have a celebration to commemorate this occasion. Jeanette and I went shopping for cake and other treats.

We put down trellis tables, advertised in the local press and enjoyed a wonderful party serving teas, coffee and eats served by Florina. It was so nice to see so many of our old customers attending this celebration. This event lasted 7 days.

An article written in the Tatler newspaper (see pg. 26). I was interviewed by a reporter whom I gladly gave a brief of the shop and its great history.

I closed the business in 2014 an innings of 110 years when I decided to retire. I am forever more grateful for the years I spent as its owner. Not only have I met a lot of interesting people, but I was also part of a great legacy which I was proud to see to the end. My memories of Brenner's Stores and its diverse history will always remain with me. ♦

Store has been clothing people for 100 years

Minette Soekoe

For 100 years and three generations, Brenner Stores in Lansdowne Road, Claremont has been clothing people.

Originally situated in the larger building next door, it served well-known customers like Dr Danie Craven, who bought Cambridge size XXX check winter shirts.

"He wouldn't come in, his wife did," said the current owner of the store, Bernard Brenner.

One of the advocates of the old National Party was also a client.

"He used to tell lots of interesting stories, but I don't want to talk politics," added Mr Brenner.

As young schoolboy he used to sit on the counter and his grandfather, Benjamin Brenner, would talk to him.

"He was an honest man," said Mr Brenner.

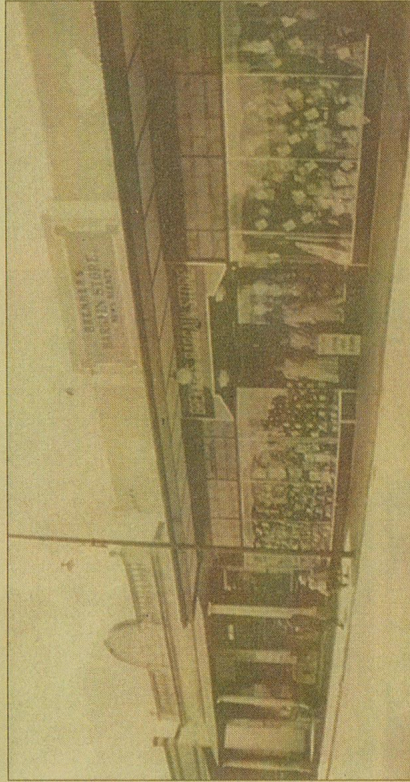
"One day a salesman entered the store and offered him an unlimited amount of credit.

"What made it so significant is that the man who had such trust in my grandfather was JW Jagger, who owned one of the biggest wholesale retailers in South Africa."

Brenner Stores celebrated its centenary at the beginning of October with big discounts, tea, coffee and cake for their customers.

"We had a very busy first nine days of the month.

"We cannot remember the exact date my grandfather established the store in 1904, but it's the right time, give or take a few days," said Mr Brenner.



■ Above: Brenner's store in Lansdowne Road has been owned by three generations of Brenners, including current owner, Bernard Brenner pictured on the right



Benjamin Brenner first rented the original shop in 1909 at £3.5s (today about R35) for the building and the stable at the back.

He bought the shop in 1920 and sold drapery and clothing.

Louis Brenner was the next generation. It was then called Brenner's Bargain Store and was also a news agent.

"For 30 years it sold magazines and newspapers and distributed them from Rondebosch to Kenilworth," said Mr Brenner.

His father and the two delivery boys, Charlie and Popey, took piles of magazines to the Newlands stadium when there was a rugby match, he recalls.

Charlie and Popey were well-known in the suburbs delivering parcels.

"Popey often took me to school on the carrier of his bicycle," said Mr Brenner.

The store used to include a Brenner's Blanket and Linen Centre as well as Brenner's Baby Boutique.

Mr Brenner joined his father in the business in 1960 after he had worked at OK Bazaars as trainee manager for four years.

"I've been here ever since," he said.

In the early 1970s the nature of the community changed due to the Group Areas Act and in 1983 Mr Brenner decided to move into a

smaller space next door. The premises were built in 1904 and are about 200 square metres. They previously housed a carpet cleaners and a television repair shop.

The Brenner tradition might end with the third generation ownership. Mr Brenner has three sons, all with interests in accounting, but none has shown interest in the store.

"Maybe my staff will take over," said Mr Brenner.

In the day-to-day running of the store, Mr Brenner is assisted by wife Rose in the office and staff Florina Moses and Jeanette Bowman.

Asked what it takes to continue building a successful business, he

replied: "Honesty, reliable staff and good service - shopping should be a good experience. Our prices are reasonable and we have good quality stock."

For the past 40 years he has upgraded merchandise and for the past 20 years the business has been catering for a niche market of mature men and women.

"We have a big following," said Mr Brenner. "We also stock school clothes."

Some of Brenner's customers were introduced to the store by their parents but most are new.

There is an old world charm to the place, something that entices you to revisit.

CHAPTER 6

THE REPS

TATLER SEPTEMBER 1979

brenner's

YOUR FRIENDLY FAMILY STORE

Ph: 61-6568
61-6656

123, Lansdowne Rd.,
Claremont



Gents Denim Jeans
R8,99

*

Kiddies Denim Jeans
R7,99

*

Lady Wrangler
Denim Jeans
R13,99

We accept Lay-Byes

- Gents Dept.
- Ladies Dept.
- Boys Dept.
- Girls Dept.
- Baby Wear
- Curtaining and Dress Materials

10%

DISCOUNT
FOR CASH

There were many interesting reps that used to regularly visit the shop to sell their wares. The agent for gents wear, Percy from Zenith Clothing, was so fussy about keeping his samples neat and tidy. He used to sell us safari suits and coloured lounge shirts. Zenith Clothing introduced 14 different shades of lounge shirts which was a much sort after gents item at our store.

For children's wear I enjoyed visiting I M Segal. As you entered his large warehouse you were greeted by Issy Segal ,who announced "Warm greetings, what will it be tea or coffee Mr Brenner?". Issy employed a rep by the name of Lew Fagin, whose hairstyle was across his face and also grew a small moustache. He used to perform an imitation of Hitler and used to act at the old Tivoli Theatre.

Then there was the dress company Manhattan owned by The Yankelowitz family. Mrs Yank had a wonderful eye for fashion and when Florina, one of my sales ladies, and I used to visit the factory we went crazy as there was so much to choose from. We would end up buying quite a bit of stock. Mr Yank was an absolute gentleman and I loved doing business with them.

In Durban there were the Lockets and Paruk families and I was very happy doing business with them all.♦



From Left: Louis Brenner, Baruch Brenner and Sam Brenner

CHAPTER 7

MUIZENBERG



These were the times when my friends and I used to visit Muizenberg Beach. We were a fun loving group of friends. Isaac, Ralph, Andrew, Gerry, Frank, Paul and Alan ,just to name a few, loved the Snake pit. It was called that strange name because we covered our bodies with tanning oil and from the promenade it looked like shiny snakes bathing in the sun. It was on the Snake pit where I met Rosalie Brooks and to whom I married a couple of years later. How many romances started there?

On a Sunday afternoon there was much entertainment, like the Vic Davis show and I remember the Levitt twins and their tap dancing skills. There was also the brass band whose members were dressed in red.



From Left: Bernard, Ralph and Itzhak life long friends

On the beach there was a fresh fruit seller, a Cape Malay fellow who spoke perfect Yiddish. There was also a display of wrestling and weightlifting by Issy Blumberg.

After I left the army at the age of 20 I went on a trip to Israel. I spent a month in Israel, I visited Greece and then spent another month in Italy. There I was privileged to watch the 1960 Olympic Games. I was great admirer of Gert Potgieter the world's best 400 meter hurdler. I was most upset to hear that Potgieter was badly injured in a car crash in Germany and could not compete. While in Italy I visited Venice and found the canals fascinating. I also visited Vesuvius and the Isle of Capri. After a great trip in Italy it was time to return home after 2 months of exploring.

On my return to Johannesburg I had a wonderful surprise. My father and my girlfriend Rose were at the airport to meet me. My dad knowing how much I liked cars had just bought a new royal blue Valiant.♦

CHAPTER 8

OUR MARRIAGE



From Left: Abe Brooks, Reeva Brooks, Rose,
Bernard, Rona Stander and Louis Brenner

In 1961 Rose and I married at the Gardens Shul. We rented a very nice newly built flat in Rosmead Ave called Leno Mansions.

A few months after we got married we decided to go to Millers' Point for a weekend and hired a caravan there. Rose unpacked her suitcase and discovered that she had forgotten to pack in a nightie. That night Rose got into bed while I was tidying up and all of a sudden we got a knock on our door. Upon opening the door, in walked Ralph Poswell (my best man) and his mother. "We thought you would like visitors" he said. Rose was so embarrassed as she could not get out of bed. I ended up making tea and served some biscuits. Just to keep the focus off Rose that was in the unfortunate position.

We were blessed with 3 beautiful or should I say Handsome sons, Clifford, Lance and Jonathan. Just a little insight: Jonlancliff is the name of my CC. 😊

Rose was pregnant with Clifford ,our eldest son, when I thought it a good idea to spend a few days at the Birkenhead Hotel in Hermanus. At that stage of my life I was a keen fisherman and was given an address of a guy in Hermanus who would sell me some *Bloodworms for bait. Rose and I arrived in Hermanus and I went to this guy's address and got my Bloodworms. In front of the hotel there is a well known rock called Rowerklip. The following day Rose and I went fishing and on arrival at the rock asked the other fisherman, are the fish biting and received a very negative response. I baited up with my bloodworms and casted into the sea.

That day was my most successful ever with rod and reel. I had caught 8 White Steen brass and gave it to the hotel chef who prepared and served it grilled on a silver platter. What a meal we had.

Clifford was born in 1962 and after he was a year and a half we decided to go to Muizenberg and sat with my sister and her friends. One of the ladies came over to see baby Clifford and noticed a bump on his stomach. She said it looks like a Hernia and that we should rush him to the Doctor. Rose and I rushed to the car and were horrified to see we were parked in.

Now the adrenaline kicked in and I bounced the car out of the way. We proceeded at great speed to Dr Dubbs home and after inspecting Clifford he diagnosed a flea bite. Moral of the story don't panic and don't listen to know it all's.

Rose and I were animal lovers and always had dogs. The ones we loved the most were the Pedigreed Standard Poodles, Coco and Kobi. Coco had a brown coat and lasted for 12 years and Kobi was black and lived for 13 years.

One day I received a telegram at the shop. On opening the message I was amazed to learn that I had won a trip for 2 on an overseas trip plus spending money. I could not believe my good fortune until we received a letter from Bata shoes confirming the prize. What had happened was that the Bata shoe rep had left forms on the desk for the public to enter a competition. A young lady had visited the shop and completed an entrance form of how to spend her favourite weekend.

She received first prize in SA and the stockist won an overseas trip. Three days before we were due to leave my youngest son Jonathan got sick and had to be admitted to hospital. Rose had to be with him as he was only three years old. We cancelled the trip and I informed Bata shoes who very kindly sent us the money.

I saved that money and 4 years later could afford to take Rose and the 3 boys on an overseas trip in a motorised caravan. We travelled to the UK, Scotland, Holland, Germany, France and Switzerland. A wonderful experience and happy memories.◊

CHAPTER 9

MOVE TO CLAREMONT



After about 18 months of marriage Rose and I decided to buy a house in Milner Road Claremont, with large grounds. Next door we met the most wonderful neighbours The Uliana's. Mr Uliana was a fantastic carpenter who fitted out restaurants and built excellent cupboards. He was also an excellent gardener who grew the most wonderful vegetables. He taught me how to grow veggies and also got me interested in growing Roses. I dug 60 holes and added clay and bought 60 Rose bushes.

Planted them and got wonderful results.

In 1968 we sold our home and moved to Newlands Road where we still live today. We wanted to live near the Shul.

My interest in gardening has never waned and to this day I have a garden full of colour magnificent aroma. Inca lilies, Geraniums, Pin Cushions, Petunias and Pansies give an unbelievable show during the months of September, October and November. I love giving flowers away to my friends.

I also have a most unusual desert succulent that blooms once a year.

This year 2015 will have a nice crop of vegetables. I have planted cucumbers, tomatoes, green peppers, beetroot and baby corn. I have also planted parsley and spring onion which are fabulous in salads. ♦



Picture of tomatoes and green peppers growing in our garden.

A Celebration of Colour in Our Magnificent Garden



CHAPTER 10

SPORT



Bernard and Neville on The Whale Trail in
Cape Agulhas

During the years of running the shop and raising a family, I became interested in sport namely tennis and squash.

I played league squash for the Vineyard Club for 30 years and tennis for Keurboom sports club. My parents were very keen bowlers and my late mother was a bowls champion. At Keurboom we made many new friends and played tennis every weekend and on Wednesdays.

At one stage we had 150 members and were very competitive to get into a team. Our children also played and Clifford won a junior tournament one year. The club also had a nucleus of senior tennis players. Great guys and we used to call them the 300 club where the combined age exceeded 300 years. Who can forget Lionel, Dolf, Eric, Sheila, Queenie, Morris, Alexander, Lew, Poppie and Joe. I remember Lionel playing Eric singles every Wednesday afternoon, even when it rained.

When Lionel passed away, at his funeral, after the coffin was lowered into the grave, Morris dropped a tennis ball onto the coffin and said "Guessed what passed you". That was one of Lionel's favourites expressions.

Joe played tennis up to the age of 90. What an amazing sportsman.

Sheila one of the stalwarts (loyal club members) had the habit of coming onto the court with a cigarette in her mouth and a handbag over her left shoulder.

The veterans decided to have their own club competition and after the early rounds the finals were contested between Alexander and Lew.

Alexander was on his way to the club from Sea Point and had an accident on the highway. Not being badly injured he phoned the AA rescue vehicle and when they arrived at the crash scene implored them to take him to Keurboom to play his finals against Lew. Such was their character and keenness to play tennis.

We used to have various fund raising functions and were mostly very successful. One such evening involved Cliffy Jones playing Honky Tonk on the piano. We served fried fish and chips on newspaper. So much fun.

We organised a western evening and Ronnie collected hay stacks from a farm in Lansdowne. We used the hay to sit on and had a very successful braai with a western theme.

I didn't realize that we presented a fire hazard. I phoned all the tennis members to bring their fire extinguishes to the braai. Just in case we needed to blow out a few hot heads.

We actually made many braais using either fish or meat.

At one of the braai's Jack advised me not to buy wood as a large Blue gum tree had been cut down and lots of wood was available. That night we had a large number of members present. About 260 persons and I made a massive fire. However the Blue gum wood was not suitable and many members had under cooked meat. It was funny at the time and today I cringe at the thought of it.

Rose won quite a few cups for winning doubles tournaments and was quite vicious at the net. Rose also represented WP at hockey and ladies cricket. These were very good times.

We used to have drinks in the bar after the game and who could forget Wilson one of the kitchen staff walking around, with plates of hot chips and tomato sauce. Singing most famous sales pitch “Cheeps”.♦

CHAPTER 11

OUR HIKING CAREER



Cobi, Bernard, Larry Meyer on top of Table
Mountain under a Waterfall

Besides my love of tennis and squash I also started regular walks on the mountain. Rose had seen an advert in the local press of a 5 day hike along the Otter Trail. This walk starts at Storms river mouth and ends at Natures Valley. One has to reserve a place a year in advance so popular is this trail. We were a group of 12 hikers and I must say that this is the most beautiful walk along the coast. Lots of swimming and sleeping in bungalows. This walk changed my life. I have introduced so many of my friends to this very interesting and healthy way of life. Since I did this walk I have completed 8 Otter trails, Tsitsikamma, Wild Coast, Greyton, Fish River, Whale Trail, Botswana, Beaufort West, Swellendam and many more.



From Left: Bernard, Rose, Shirley and Neville on the Otter Trail

Who can ever forget the Fish River Canyon at night when the moon goes over the canyon and it lights up the valley. I am very indebted to Willie Olivier and Alan Wolframm, trail leaders, who opened up a new world for Rose and I.

Rose and I were going to Sun City with our tennis friends. As we were motoring there I suggested that on the way we could stop at Augrabies falls. There is a 3 day hike along the Orange River. It's a very remote area but we had no fear and spent 3 very interesting days there. The 2 huts were not at all comfortable but at least it was a shelter. One day Rose said it would be so nice to have a bath. At this hut there on the ground was a rusty iron shelf. I proceeded to make a fire and warmed up some water. Rose had her bath. There is a lot of birdlife and we used to see fresh spoor of a Leopard every day. The Orange River is very muddy and not at all inviting.



Bernard pointing towards the Orange River

A week before Jonathans Barmitvah I suggested to Rose that the 3 of us go for a weekend to Greyton/McGregor. We left on the Friday and drove straight to McGregor. We slept over and the following day left early on our walk to Greyton. On the way there we met people walking to McGregor who warned us about the presence of a Cobra at the waterfall. Thanking them for the warning we continued our walk to Greyton. Another group walking towards us also mentioned the snake at the waterfall.

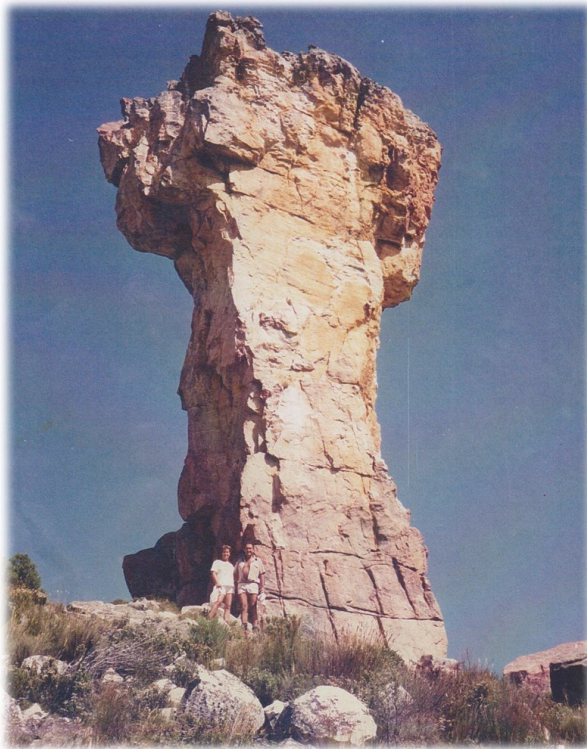
With that I found a large stick and a round stone and continued our walk. We arrived at the waterfall and fortunately did not see the snake and continued our walk to Greyton. It is a very pretty village. We booked into the Greyton Hotel. That evening we were quite hungry and looked forward to a good supper. We had Boerewors and mash potato and requested an extra helping but were informed that Mrs Fourie (the owner of the hotel) had only ordered 6 sausages for her 6 guests.

At this Hotel there was a very large Great Dane dog, the friendliest of dogs whose company we enjoyed. He slept in the passage outside our room. In the middle of the night I needed to go for a tinkle and when I opened our bedroom door it creaked and the dog started growling. What was I to do? I opened the window and there was a large plant on the stoep. I hoped the plant survived the midnight watering. 😊

The next day we proceeded to walk back to McGregor and started our journey back to Cape Town .

I took Lance (my middle son) on one of our many visits to the Cederberg to visit the Wolfberg Cracks and on the first day Lance needed a toilet and asked me where he could go. "Lance", I replied, "you can go anywhere out of the way behind a tree". Lance was not amused and I don't think he ever came again. 😊

However I am very proud of my 3 sons as they all got involved in sport and their physical well being, like Rose and I. 💎



Bernard and Rose at the Maltese Cross one of the many natural attractions in the Cederberg.

CHAPTER 12

BETTY'S BAY



Willie Olivier had organised a walk from Betty's Bay to Hawston. We spent the first night in bungalows at the Palmiet River. The following day we had lunch at the Harold Porter Gardens in Bettys Bay. This area made a tremendous impression on me and I felt so comfortable in and amongst all this fynbos.

The definition of Fynbos is a variety of plant species indigenous to an area. Plants like Proteas, grasses like Dakriet which is used on thatch roofs. Also the family of Erica's of which there are over 700 varieties. You also find endemic plant life which is exclusively found in the Kogelberg Mountains. A good example is Nivenia which has a deep blue colour.

When I returned home from this trip I said to Rose that one day I would like to have a holiday home in this fantastic area called Betty's Bay. As it happened we bought land there and built a new house in 1991. We are still enjoying the house and the Fynbos.

One day we did a walk on the Kleinmond Mountains called The Perdeberg. Once you reach the top the views are incredible of Kleinmond and the coast to Hermanus. On the way down our group of 6 got onto a very easy path and quite wide. After a few metres I tripped and fell down. I dusted myself down and continued. After another 20 metres I fell again and all wanted to know why I fell. I had no answer and was thoroughly mystified. After a couple of hours we reached our home in Betty's Bay. A friend had bought me a book about walks in Pringle Bay, Rooi Els, Betty's Bay and Kleinmond.

In this book it described a walk in Kleinmond on the Perdeberg and when descending at precisely the same place on this walk strange occurrences have been reported. Example in a thick mist a man on a horse has been reported and other ghostly happenings. Do I believe in spooks? I don't know, but I fell for no reason so you never know what was lurking around.♦



Our beautiful holiday home in Betty's Bay, Built in 1991.

With the Kogelberg Mountains as a backdrop, surrounded by Fynbos and overlooking the picturesque Betty's Bay Lagoon, this is truly our home away from home.

CHAPTER 13

NAMIBIA



In 2007 I organised a trip to Namibia. Six of us in Larry's kombi.

First night we slept at a wonderful camp on the banks of the Orange River. Next day on to Aus and en route passed through the town of Rosh Pinah where there exists a lead and zinc mine. We spent 2 nights in Aus and the first day visited Kolmanskop. A deserted town occupied by German diamond prospectors. In 1929 they discovered diamonds further south and the town was abandoned. A most fascinating town. In this town there was a Gymnasium which was also used as a place to keep meat. Very thick walls to keep it cool and other items that needed to keep cold. The deserted homes were fairly modern and we were warned to beware of Snakes and Hyenas.

Then on to Luderitz a sleepy fishing village, but interesting.

The next day we travelled through the Namib Desert and stopped at Sossusvlei. Here is the place of enormous sand dunes. People have taken incredible photos of the dunes which often appear in calendars. The secret is to arrive at 5am that's when the one side of the dune is black as it is still dark but the other side shows the first rays of the new day and appears in a reddish hue. After the dunes we carried on to Walvis Bay and lunch before proceeding to Swakopmund.

On the way there we stopped at a place called Desert Adventures. Here they hired out quad bikes. Each one of us hired a quad bike and followed our leader over the dunes. What an amazing experience and spent the rest of the day laughing. We had a great time.

We then continued to the coastal resort of Swakopmund. We spent 2 nights there and went the following day on a desert excursion where we visited the moonscape and the Welwitschia plants. These plants survive on the mist from the sea and survive for very many years.

Swakopmund is a great resort and in great demand in summer as it is cooled by the cold Atlantic ocean. Also renowned as a place with great Confectionery like Black Forest Cake and superb coffee.

Going north we travelled to Khorixas and there we visited the Petrified Forests where the trees were millions of years old and turned into granite. One can still see the rings on the trees and the branches. Our guide said that many millions of years ago a great flood had brought these trees from Angola. This fascinating country provides one with so much interest.

We then journeyed to Twyfelfonein and saw incredible rock paintings where the children of that time were introduced to their way of life by all these rock paintings. We continued on to Etosha Game Reserve and spent a few nights at Okaukuejo. There is a large water hole at the camp, fenced off for the tourists safety. Here one can observe Lions, Elephants, Rhinos and a large variety of game that came to drink every day. The water hole was lit up at night which added to its interest. We were lucky on this visit as we saw more than 30 lions in 3 days.

Coming back to SA I had planned to travel through Namaqualand during the flower season and spent the first night at Springbok.

On the way there we stopped at Nababeep. An old copper mining town which was ablaze with orange colours. After Springbok we travelled to the Skilpad Nature Reserve near Kamieskroon. Skilpad was bought by the Rupert family the trustees of World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF). The flowers are always prolific on account of the moisture blown in from the daily fog. So whether it rains or not the flowers are always in bloom.

What a treat we were served by nature. Then on to Niewoudville, the bulb capital of the world. The bulb flowers are amazing and should be visited by all flower lovers. Because of where it is situated it enjoys 3 climate zones which account for its large diversity. Beside the flowers, there is a trace of the ice age where the rocks have been smoothed over by ice passing over. While in Niewoudville it pays to have lunch at Matjiesfontein which is about 10 km out of town. Here you get to a very old farm/shed which is electrified by an ancient donkey generator belching large amount of smoke and chugging away .

You have to bend when entering. They serve a very tasty stew and if you are lucky the old lady takes you for a **“Tickiedraai”* before lunch. What a great experience. After lunch you drive through the farm and flower reserve.

On the way back to Cape Town we passed the pretty town of Citrusdal where we spent many holidays at the Warmbadde. In the heart of the orange growing area the hot spring waters flows continuously into the Jacuzzi and large swimming pool. Bennie Katzman used to book bungalows for up to 20 persons and a good time was had by

all. We also used to often walk in the Cederberg and Winterhoek mountains.

One trip I walked in the Winterhoek with Roy Mee. He went for an early morning swim and a bit later I joined him. Roy asked me if I could identify a beautiful flower. "Yes I can it is a White Disa". Unfortunately we did not photograph it but referred to the SA Mountain Club Magazine where it is stated that the white Disa in the Winterhoek only blooms once every 30 years.♦



Bernard swimming at the Winterhoek
Mountains

CHAPTER 14

MORE HOLIDAYS



In 1990 Rose and I went on holiday to Israel and then to London. We had booked a small Suzuki motor camper that had a tiny place to sleep with a tiny fridge and an equally tiny stove. There it was waiting for us at Heathrow and our tour of England and Scotland began. We slept at a variety of caravan parks and enjoyed the beauty of the United Kingdom. In Scotland I had booked for the Edinburgh Festival and saw the military tattoo which was the highlight of our trip. When you sit on your seat at the Edinburgh castle you sit with such anticipation until the pipes started up and the Highlanders march into the stadium. For the next 2 hours the action continues.

Places like the Lake District and Chester were very interesting and the trip was so exciting.

In recent years Rose and I love going to Montague where we enjoy the hot spring water in wonderful mountain surrounding's and the dry Karoo air. At Montague we were advised to visit Burgers tractor rides at Mr Burgers farm 29 km from Montague and is situated on Burgers Pass. It is so named as 3 generations of Burgers have been farming there. Mr Burger built a trailer that hooks on to a tractor and takes 40 persons up a long winding path to the top of the mountain overlooking the picturesque Koo valley on the one side and Riversdale on the other side. On top of the mountain Mr Burger has constructed a doubled storied 3 walled house. The 4th wall is the side of the rocky mountain, ingenious. While we were on top of the mountain I noticed some construction on the mountain from the Riversdale side and on enquiring Mr Burger

informed me that a hiking trail was being constructed by the Riversdal municipality. On the way down back to Burgers farm we stopped half way and were given secateurs (special scissors) amongst the Proteas and told to pick as many as we desired. Nearing the bottom of the trail we stopped again for a Potjiekos lunch. A very nice trip indeed.

On arriving home I phoned the Riversdal municipality and made a booking for the shortly to be opened Arangieskop hiking trail for 10 persons.

Three weeks later we went on the trail and after a 6 hour strenuous walk we arrived at the hut. Mr Burger had very kindly left us some fresh fruit and wine. The house could easily accommodate 10 persons. We made a large fire and prepared supper. After a very restful night we awoke the following day and descended via a circular route.

Greta Gorin, one of our walking group, had made a reservation at the West Coast National Park. This beautiful place is very near to the Langebaan Lagoon. We stayed at a place named Geelbek which is sponsored by the Gold mines. There are daily walks amongst the Renosterbos and near the sea by the Strandveld vegetation. Very hardy plants and a few bird hides to add to this interesting place. Our food was prepared by the staff at Geelbek and was delicious west coast fare like Snoek and Baboetie and lots of sweet vegetables. ♦



From Left: Rose, Lauren, Rochelle, Clifford, Bradley and Bernard at Mr Burger's tractor ride in winter.

CHAPTER 15

SOUTHERLAND

We visited the surface of Mars!



Rose and I went to Sutherland to see the stars and planets. Sutherland is one of the coldest places in South Africa. It is on a plateau in the Karroo with no seismic movement and no pollution and was thus selected to be an ideal place to establish telescopes and research into the planets. There are many countries that have erected their own telescopes. Sutherland is also well known for its mutton and wool production. Getting there one stops at Matjiesfontein. It is so interesting there with the Lord Milner hotel in the centre. Mr Logan had established on the station a supply store for the British troops during the 1899/1902 Anglo Boer war. There is a very interesting museum plus a wonderful collection of vintage cars. ♦



Rose in front of the Lord Milner Hotel in
Matjiesfontein

CHAPTER 16

BECOMING A TOUR GUIDE



BERNARD BRENNER TOURS

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Member of CAPTOUR
Registered with SATOUR

In 1990 it was suggested that I should become a tour guide. I gave it much thought and yes I would apply to SA Tourism board in Pretoria. I was interviewed a few times by a gentleman from Pretoria, and Yes! I was registered as a Cape Town tour guide including hiking trails.

After having brochures made I advertised in various hotels. I then started getting jobs. Tourism is a fantastic industry and Cape Town one of the great destinations of world travellers.

I had some very interesting clients. I received a call from the UK to book me for a tour on the slopes of the mountain to film indigenous trees. After a successful day the leader of the film crew said to me that they also had an assignment to film a South African family preparing a traditional meal. Could I make any suggestion. "Yes I can make you a fish braai". Sunday arrived plus the film crew and I had bought a Geelbek otherwise known as Cape Salmon. The braai was very successful and Rose had prepared delicious salads.

The whole film was first class and appeared on the Carlton food channel ,Meals Of The World. The channel had sold the show to SAA and Qantas Airlines, so we had a lot of publicity. I still have a tape of the meal.😊





Snippet from the film 'Meals of The World',
Bernard cooking up a storm with the fish braai



Bernard enjoying the spoils of his delicious fish braai

Another memorable trip I will always remember were 2 sisters, senior citizens who booked me on a tour up the Garden Route as far as Storms River mouth. I gave them much care and they so enjoyed the braais and the scenery of the Garden Route. At Storms River they were keen to do a short walk to the river mouth and so enjoyed the suspension bridge.

After this very enjoyable trip they booked me for the following year to see the flowers in Namaqualand.

I met some great people once. I had to take a group of Indonesians to their Waterfront Hotel. They were a large group and on the way to the hotel I spoke about the history of the Cape. Their leader said “Bernard we would rather you sing us some local tunes”. I simply obliged as much as I could and they had so much fun.

I did many happy tours to Cape Point, trips to Stellenbosch and Franschoek. I took some people to Hermanus and on the way there spent the night at Betty’s Bay at my holiday house. Did many tours with Canadians and Israelis. I did all this while I was still running the Brenner’s shop in Lansdowne. However I’m thankful to a wonderful wife and marvellous staff who held the fort while I was on my many adventures.♦

CHAPTER 17

A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE



In September 2015 I left Cape Town with a wonderful group of fun loving guys for the Kruger Park. We met our armed guards at Satara and after some shopping left for our bush camp Sweni. While driving there in our Jeep we saw Leopard, 2 Cheetahs and Elephants. On Monday we saw a lot of dust on the horizon. Hundreds of Buffalo on the hoof.

The next day we walked in the bush as our armed leader expected to see Lions. Well we surprised ourselves and a pride of about 30 Lions that brought down a Giraffe. Distance from us about 70m. We were instructed to run like hell and went back to our camp to fetch our vehicle. Back to the Lions and from the safety of our vehicle we could take close up shots of the pride. This was the best viewing ever. The last 2 days we enjoyed seeing 4 Rhino and a Leopard pulling a buck into a tree. ♦



Pride of Lions snacking on a Giraffe at the Kruger National Park

CHAPTER 18

OUR WALKING GROUP



My friends and I still walk every Sunday. A very loyal group that have been walking together for the last 25 years. Thank you Rose, Neville, Colin, Fluster, Simone, Gerald, Josseline, Meyer, Shirley, Greta and the late Wolf.

I would also like to thank Neville, Mike and the other guys for keeping our tennis group going strong.

At Claremont Shul I became friendly with a gentleman the late Aaron Wagenheim who gave me a nickname Bernsie. He suggested to me that for my 60th birthday I should sing a Haftorah (reading from the prophets) on the Shabbat in 5 months time. "Aaron", I said, "I am not a great student and my singing ability leaves much to be desired." "Bernsie", he said, "I will make you a tape and help you all the way." "OK Aaron, I will try" and I struggled along but with Aarons help I eventually learnt my Haftorah. At the Shabbat service that day I had some family and friends present and I think I managed very well. Aaron was overjoyed and said to me, "Bernsie I have a new Haftorah in 3 weeks time". He made me the tape of that Haftorah. Rose and I were shortly to go to Plettenberg for our timeshare. I took the tape with us. Well I didn't get much of a tan as I spent 7 days practising. When the time came to say my Haftorah I had no problem at all.

Unfortunately Aaron got sick and he eventually passed away. A great loss to his family, the community and I. ♦

Conclusion

I am so grateful to have had such an interesting life and hopefully will continue to enjoy new opportunities.

Rose has been at my side during this journey and has always encouraged me in business and our various sporting activities and I thank her so much. ♥

My gratitude to Hashem for granting me throughout life good fortune of a loving and supportive wife, three wonderful sons and the joy of four Brenner grandchildren.◊

CHAPTER 19

MEMORIES FROM MY SISTER RONA



In 2014 after my Brother Bernard told me that he had decided to sell up the business and retire. I thought that I would like to go back for old time sake, as I had emigrated to Australia.

I need to go back to 1933, on Armistice Day, when I was born and for 5 years grew up in the same house where our Father, his brothers and sisters grew up, which was at the back of the SHOP in Lansdowne Road.

As a young girl I was always in the shop, where I was taught how to fold up the ladies underwear, towels, tablecloths... etc. etc. and placed in the right draw. Mrs. Goslett, who, worked for many years and was a very strict teacher insisted I was taught everything the right way! She was the one that said to me one day, You are getting to be a big girl and try on this bra!!!

Lansdowne Road, reminded me of the Barber Shop, where I had my haircut every couple of weeks, until he cut the tip of my ear and I came running back to the shop with blood running down my neck. Last time I went to a barbershop!

After school, I popped into Mrs. Farmer, who had a shop on the corner and I was friends with her son and daughter. Jack Farmer was a little older than me and loved teasing me because I could not stay too long as I had to go home to do my homework. I was only 6 years old!

Around the corner from Mrs Farmers shop was our dressmaker, where Mother took me for fittings. On some afternoons I had to go to the local convent to learn to play the piano.

The nuns were angry if I made a mistake and smacked my knuckles with a ruler. We had many more friends living in Lansdowne Road, the Beekman family were also my friends, they had a grocer shop a little higher up than our shop. Our cousins lived in the Lansdowne Hotel, where we went for Pesach Seder, and there was always someone who spilled the wine and was sent upstairs to bed and no supper! The shoemaker Mr Teper were next door their son was Bernards' friend and the daughter was mine.....We had a lot of fun as kids.

My one memory of the old days in the shop was watching my Mother every morning count up the pennies and rolled them in paper for the bank. Her fingers were always black at the end of morning. We were a newsagent sold the morning and afternoons newspapers and the mail would arrive every Thursday for Mrs Cooper to check and allocate to the customers. We kids were allowed to read the comics. The newspapers were sold for two pence!

My Brother was born in September 1938, and I still remember that Sunday Morning when war was declared and Dad had to go sell extra newspapers. We had to be quiet every evening when the 6 o'clock news came over the radio.

I remember my Mother with knitting whenever she had a free moment, socks for the boys up north!

Some of the dates that stand out for me is 5th November Guy Fawkes, had to get home early from school, no wasting of time, as there was a counter already out front of the shop for me to sell the crackers, rockets etc. etc.

I was in charge of the money and had to be very careful. Any over we were allowed to take home for the evening with and enjoy them the neighbor's kids. The month of December we were very busy selling Christmas presents and there was no play that month work every afternoon after school. The staff did not like 27th December they called it Many Happy Returns Day. Not good for business!! Then came New Year ..Oh boy! that was an exciting time. Daddy very busy with the Malays who came for their Blazers, bought at Rex Trueform, Sandshoes ordered from Bata in Rhodesia and of course the satins for their costumes. We kids ran down to Lansdowne Road early on 'tweede neue jaar' to see the Coons dancing and singing down the road....wonderful memory.

The staff that worked for us were always a very important and part of business. I have already mentioned Mrs Goslett, she was in charge of one section of the shop and don't forget to greet her properly. Mrs Cooper had her special duties and we had a few extra young ladies as the years went by.

There were also 3 men on the staff, Charlie...every Friday after pay went straight to Lansdowne Hotel! Popeye was a good guy and then there was Lenny, who eventually bought my piano, as I did not want to learn anymore. He was such a lovely quiet man. They had to deliver the newspapers every day and of course the customers would phone for something ,they got the best service!

Saturday afternoons Dad went to Newlands to watch rugby and when I was a teenager I used to go with.

He always tested me to see if I watching the game or the BOYS. I wonder why he thought that!! He always brought a packet of monkey nuts (peanuts) home for us.

One thing I loved to do on Saturday nights I would go to my parents room to watch them get dressed for a night of clubbing. They were wonderful dancers. One night my Mom looked beautiful with a white dress on and Dad in his best suit. When she decided to put another coat of nail polish on her nails. Yes she spilled onto the dress.....disaster!

After I married and had three sons, they used to come to help Zayda in the shop. They had to climb the ladders to get the shoes down. Not sure if they liked it but.....I think they learned something.

I always enjoyed being one of assistants. Enjoyed the people and whenever I walked down Lansdowne Road, I was greeted with Hello Miss Rona.....◇

Sixth Annual
S.A. Police Ball
(Wynberg District)



Director of Ceremonies:
Lieut. H. Hare-Bowers.

M.C.'s:
Sergts. H. James, P. D. le Roux,
E. Middleton and F. W. Alexander,
Consts. F. Noschke & J. R. Gratton.

Hon. Secretary:
Const. S. C. Botha.

PROGRAMME



Town Hall, Wynberg
Wed., 6th June, 1928

Zabow & Moller's Orchestra

Dancing from 8.30 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Tickets for Late Motor Buses to Cape Town
and Kalk Bay (Trappies) may be obtained
at Pay Box up to 11 p.m. at 2/6 each.

Original Programme of a Police Ball held at the
Wynberg Town Hall

A short yet entertaining Autobiography of a man with a rich history. He has been blessed with a very diverse, adventurous and amazing life. Bernard Brenner wrote this book on the premise of passing on his life story to future generations. This book will take you way back and make you feel as though you are part of the adventure.

